

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 02398 181646Z POSS DUPE
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8062

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2398

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, ECON, ES
SUBJECT: ANNUAL MEETING OF BUSINESSMEN'S GROUP

1. THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (ANEP)
WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL MEETING ON MAY 19. FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
ERNESTO RIVAS GALLONT WILL DELIVER THE MAIN SPEECH.

2. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, ANEP IS A MAJOR FACTOR ON THE
LOCAL SCENE, TRADITIONALLY STANDING AS A BULWARD OF THE
FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AND AS A STAUNCH DEFENDER OF THE
POSITION AND PRIVILEGE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

3. IN RECENT MONTHS, WE HAVE HEARD FROM VARIOUS SOURCES
THAT ANEP MAY BE COMING TO RECOGNIZE SOME OF THE PRESSURES
FOR CHANGE IN TODAY'S EL SALVADOR. TWO MAJOR BUSINESS
EXECUTIVES HAVE TOLD US THAT THE PRESIDENCIES OF ANEP'S
COMPONENT CHAMBERS AND FEDERATIONS NO LONGER GO TO
TRADITIONALIST SENIOR MEMBERS BUT RATHER TO THE BRIGHTEST
AND THE BEST CANDIDATES AVAILABLE. THIS IN CLEAR RECOGNITION
OF THE FACT THAT TIMES ARE CHANGING. THE PRESIDENT OF ANEP
HIMSELF HAS SAID TO US THAT IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE
TO THINK THAT ANEP IS ONLY A FIRM AND UNYIELDING DEFENDER
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PAGE 02 SAN SA 02398 181646Z POSS DUPE

OF THE STATUS QUO. WHILE WE TAKE SUCH STATEMENTS WITH
SOME GRAINS OF SALT, THEY ARE DESERVING OF NOTE.

4. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN GIVEN AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY TO
RECEIVE AND COMMENT UPON RIVAS GALLONT'S SPEECH TO BE
DELIVERED FRIDAY. SOMEWHAT TO OUR DISMAY, WE HAVE FOUND
IT TO BE VERY HARD LINE, OUTSPOKEN IN ITS DEFENSE OF THE

CAPITALIST SYSTEM AS IT EXISTS IN EL SALVADOR, AND VEHEMENT
IN ITS DENUNCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM AND ELEMENTS
OF THE CHURCH AS INSTIGATORS OF THE ILLS, THE PROBLEMS, AND
THE VIOLENCE WHICH TODAY TROUBLE THIS COUNTRY. WHEN GIVEN
ADVANCE COPY, WE WERE TOLD IT IS STRICTLY A FIRST DRAFT AND
THAT EMBASSY REACTION AND/OR SUGGESTIONS WULD BE ENTERTAINED.

5. IN OUR BEHIND-THE-SCENES COMMENT, WE ARE URGING THAT
THE SPEECH BE MADE MORE REASONABLE AND LESS ACCUSATORY, THAT
IT TAKE NOTE OF THE FACT THAT WE LIVE IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING
WORLD, THAT EL SALVADOR CANNOT HOPE TO ISOLATE ITSELF FROM
SUCH CHANGE, BUT THAT THE BEST WAY OF ACHIEVING ORDERLY
CHANGE RATHER THAN POSSIBLE CHAOS LIES IN HONEST RECOGNITION OF
AND DEALING WITH THOSE LEGITIMATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRESSURES
WHICH DO EXIST. FAILURE TO DO THIS, WE ARE SUGGESTING,
ABANDONS THE FIELD OF PUBLIC SYMPATHY, SENTIMENT AND SUPPORT
TO THOSE EXTREMIST FORCES WHO IN FACT WISH TO PRECIPITATE
DISORDERLY AND VIOLENT CHANGE.

6. WHETHER THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR ANY ANEP SPEAKER OR
AUDIENCE, WE DO NOT KNOW, BUT WE ARE TRYING TO DEVELOP
AS MUCH IMPACT ON THE SPEECH AS MAY BE POSSIBLE.
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